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SUBJECT: FRENCH VIEWS ON EU FORCE IN EASTERN CHAD

REF: STATE 103146

Classified By: Political Minister-Counselor Josiah Rosenblatt, 1.4 (b/d
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[11.](#) (C) SUMMARY: MFA DAS-equivalent Helene Le Gal on July 26 said that France sought the deployment in eastern Chad of an EU peacekeeping force (2,000-2,500 troops) early in November. Prior to that, France would seek a UN Security Council Resolution authorizing the EU to undertake the mission; the UNSCR was indispensable for the EU to establish the operation in conformity with EU legal requirements. The purpose of the EU mission would be to provide security to the refugee and IDP camps in eastern Chad, but not to provide border security. The UN, the French conceive, would agree to provide police/gendarme capability in parallel to the EU mission and agree to assume formal control of the overall operation one year after its deployment. Le Gal said that, for the moment, France did not contemplate a direct U.S. role in this project, but she said that any USG political statements in support would be welcome, and that at some later stage the U.S. could play a role in prodding potential European troop contributors. Le Gal said that a small part of the EU force could also deploy in the C.A.R. END SUMMARY.

[12.](#) (C) Helene Le Gal, MFA DAS-equivalent for East and Central Africa, met with us on July 26 to discuss reftel demarche, and offered clear responses to its main points.

OVERALL GAME PLAN

[13.](#) (C) Le Gal said that France was working towards an early November deployment of an EU peacekeeping mission in eastern Chad, whose function would be to provide security for refugee and IDP camps; it would not be charged with securing the Chad-Sudan border. The force would be composed of 2,000-2,500 troops, with France providing the majority of the forces. However, France and its EU partners would need a UN Security Council Resolution authorizing the EU to deploy the mission. She said that the UNSCR did not need to be specific and could consist of a general authorization. The resolution could also contain a provision stating that the UN would mount a civilian police mission in eastern Chad in conjunction with the EU mission. As a third component, the UNSCR would also stipulate that the UN would assume control of the EU mission within one year after its deployment. The EU mission itself would have an initial six-month mandate, with an option to extend it for six more months, after which the UN would assume control.

[14.](#) (C) The UNSCR would allow the EU to create and structure the operation, in accordance with EU practices and procedures. Le Gal noted that the decisions taken at the July 23 meeting were only preparatory; an "action commune" decision was required, and this could only happen with the UNSCR in place. She noted Germany's reluctance to endorse

the plan, and the fact that it had taken high-level engagement to prevent Germany from trying to block the mission at the July 23 EU session.

15. (C) Le Gal said that France hoped the EU decision could take place circa September 10, which would require adoption of a Security Council resolution beforehand. EU approval would authorize funding for such preliminary activities as fact-finding, military planning, development of a CONOPS, and other steps necessary before deployment could begin. French military planners were already at work on a provisional CONOPS, which should ensure accelerated EU action.

FORCES

16. (C) MILITARY: Le Gal said that the French would provide at least half of the 2,000-2,500 personnel and was therefore seeking roughly 1,000 troops from other EU members. She believed Poland, Spain, and Sweden had committed about 150 troops each, and Romania was considering participation. Non-EU states such as NATO-members Turkey and Norway were also possible contributors, although she said that EU members had to constitute the first deployment force. The UK and Germany refused to contribute and Denmark (which had opted out of ESDP) could not participate. Portugal had so far been mute, but Le Gal said that Lisbon, as the current EU president, would feel compelled to make at least a token troop contribution.

17. (C) Le Gal said that French forces already deployed in Chad as part of Operation Epervier would not participate in the new mission. Operation Epervier, she said, was primarily aerial in nature and did not include ground specialists, so France would need to deploy infantry troops for the EU

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mission. Operations Epervier, however, would provide logistical and transportation support, especially when the new operation's forces began arriving in Chad.

18. (C) The Rules of Engagement for the new mission would be standard EU ROE ("comparable to but perhaps a bit less robust than NATO's," Le Gal noted), similar to the ROE that applied to the EU mission deployed in the DRC. The UNSC authorization would not determine the mandate, CONOPS, or ROE of the EU mission, but it would specify the UN's own role, which Le Gal said would be primarily civilian in nature, specifically the CIVPOL component.

19. (C) CIVPOL: The part of the mission to be under UN control would involve 1,000 UN civpol, Le Gal anticipated. These would include the absorption under UN command and the UN salary structure of 800 Chadian gendarmes, some of whom were currently part of UNHCR efforts to provide refugee camp security. Le Gal said that francophone African countries had to be the primary source of personnel; Jordanian civpol, for example, were not viable candidates. France would contribute a few civpol, who would likely play a liaison role with Chad.

CHAD'S VIEWS

110. (C) Le Gal said that Deby remained unconvinced and was wary of the French plan, especially with respect to what he believed could result in a large-scale UN presence in eastern Chad. Deby feared that the EU and UN operation could become a launching pad for a possible "invasion" of Darfur from Chad, thus embroiling Chad in a subsequent conflict with Sudan not of Chad's own making. Le Gal stressed the need to convince him that the EU operation, followed by the UN mission, would be good for Chad, and to emphasize that neither mission would be huge in scale. She added that the EU operation would not address political reconciliation in Chad, commenting that the EU already had an established process led by EU Commissioner Louis Michel.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

¶11. (C) Le Gal said that the French plan included the deployment of a small contingent of EU forces into northeastern C.A.R. In contrast to Chad President Deby, C.A.R. President Bozize actively wanted an EU or UN deployment. Le Gal said that EU Foreign Policy Chief Solana had phoned C.A.R. President Bozize on July 25 and received an enthusiastic response. Le Gal said that FOMUC forces, where were deployed in and around Bangui on a specific mandate, would not be involved in the EU operation, though there was a good case for placing FOMUC liaison officers within the EU operation. French forces presently in C.A.R., specifically in Birao, could be rehatted for the new EU mission, she remarked, although the matter had not yet been settled.

AFRICAN UNION

¶12. (C) Le Gal said that France was not seeking an active AU role in the new mission in Chad -- the AU's approval, in the form of a Peace and Security Council declaration, would suffice, along the lines the AU had granted to the EU for its operation in the DRC. She noted that FM Kouchner was currently in Addis Ababa and would discuss the matter with AU Chairman Konare. The EU would likely offer the AU a liaison officer slot at the mission's headquarters. When the EU dispatched forces to the DRC, it had made a similar offer, but the AU had declined. Le Gal said that France was reluctant to seek involvement with Africa's subregional groupings, especially CEN-SAD, which Libya dominated.

HUMANITARIAN/RECONSTRUCTION

¶13. (C) Le Gal noted that appeals would be made to the usual UN agencies for humanitarian support for refugees and IDPs in eastern Chad. She acknowledged that there was competition with Darfur for donor resources, with Chad's needs less well addressed. Le Gal indicated that it was premature to consider longer term reconstruction issues.

U.S. ROLE

¶14. (C) At several points we asked whether France wanted or expected the U.S. to play an active role in this project. Underscoring that the Chadian operation would be an EU mission, Le Gal saw no need for direct U.S. involvement. However, she invited the U.S. to renew the discussion early in September, particularly with an eye to U.S. help in encouraging participation by Europeans and other potential troop contributors and in terms of focusing the UN. France was grateful for U.S. humanitarian assistance in Chad and

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would welcome public statements in support of the EU's operation.

DARFUR

¶15. (C) Le Gal believed the EU force would have a salutary impact on Darfur. The border area in Chad would no longer be a No-Man's Land, and the refugee camps and IDP population would prove less fertile ground for militia recruitment. Darfur rebel factions would draw the message, she hoped, that they needed to participate in a political process.

COMMENT

¶16. (C) Le Gal provided succinct and incisive responses to the issues raised reftel and, at least in general terms, presented a coherent vision of what the French want to accomplish. However, rapid agreement among partners and equally rapid action in the UNSC and in Brussels will be necessary for the French to keep to their timetable, complicated by the inevitable worldwide summer slowdown -- Le Gal herself leaves shortly for three weeks of holiday. She nonetheless expressed firm French commitment to this plan and is likely to remain a candid interlocutor during its

development and implementation. END COMMENT.

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